

THE CREATIVE BALTIMORE INITIATIVE

Mayor Martin O'Malley's Creative Baltimore Working Group

Doing More to Attract, Engage and Retain the Creative Class

A White Paper Intended to Provoke Discussion

Peabody Institute Symposium: "The Role of the Arts in Urban Revitalization"

April 23rd, 2004

Initiative Overview

Creative Baltimore is an initiative undertaken by Mayor Martin O'Malley to spur discussion and actions that will better position and promote Baltimore as a diverse, creative and opportunity-rich city. The initiative is largely a response to the work of Richard Florida, who in his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, argues that “creative class” residents are a key factor for growth and economic development in a city. The term “creative class” refers not just to artists but to workers in a range of knowledge-based industries, from scientists to computer programmers to writers. Florida argues that the creative class gravitates to places that are diverse and tolerant, offer a range of authentic and unique experiences, and have a multitude of arts, cultural, recreational and intellectual opportunities.

Baltimore City already has the characteristics and opportunities that make it one of the nation's creative centers. A Creative Baltimore Working Group has been established to catalogue, coordinate and build upon already existing activities that attract, engage and retain creative class residents, or more specifically artists, students, young professionals, creative entrepreneurs and empty nesters. The Working Group will accomplish much of its work—developing and then implementing a Creative Baltimore action plan—through its collaboration with key partners aligned around specific projects designed to attract and retain the creative class.

Ongoing Tasks

Identifying Partners and Fostering Connections - The Working Group has moved quickly to involve key private partners, including college and university leaders; arts and cultural institution representatives; creative entrepreneurs; professional artists and grassroots organizations; and business and foundation leaders. Creative Baltimore partners are being asked to provide information on ongoing creative class activities and to provide ideas on how to better attract, engage and retain artists, students, young professionals, creative entrepreneurs and empty nesters.

Compiling Inventories of Ongoing Activities and New Ideas - Baltimore harbors a broad range of opportunities and assets, including: culture and the arts; colleges and universities; creative businesses; medicine and the sciences; cultural and recreational settings and activities, and the ideas of its residents; all of which are being catalogued so that they can be more broadly marketed and developed. New ideas have been collected over the past year and a half at two art town hall meetings, through the Mayor's public online survey, and at a recent series of Creative Baltimore subgroup meetings.

Developing a Creative Baltimore Action Plan - Based on the information gathered from key public and private partners as well as the general public, the Working Group is making recommendations for an action plan that consolidates, targets and aligns public and private resources to better position and promote Baltimore as a creative, opportunity-rich city in order to attract, engage and retain more creative class residents. Key partners will be assembled into project teams for each Creative Baltimore action item.

Developing a Consistent Message and Marketing Strategy - A central product of the Working Group will be to develop a transcendent, authentic and broadly-utilized positive message about Baltimore. Once developed, this message will be included in informational and marketing campaigns that will advance the scope and reach of existing and new initiatives. It is important that this marketing be audience sensitive.

Working Group Recommendations

In what is an ongoing effort, public and private partners recently came together to review the inventory of new ideas and identify priority projects that will help Baltimore City attract, engage and retain members of the creative class. These and other projects will form the basis of an initial Creative Baltimore action plan.

The ideas are listed under the following categories below:

- I. Creating a Vibrant, Artistic and Tolerant Urban Atmosphere**
- II. Making It Happen**
- III. Communicating and Connecting People to Existing Opportunities**
- IV. Growing and Retaining Talent**
- V. Increasing Funding for Arts and Culture**

Each item lists the target population(s) within the creative class that the project is most likely to attract and help retain.

I. Creating a Vibrant, Artistic and Tolerant Urban Atmosphere

- **Living Streets: Public Art and Culture** – (Target population: All) Creative class members are drawn to cities with a vibrant street life and an open and engaging arts scene. "Public art" projects could include sculptures, murals, art displays in storefronts, building lobbies and conference rooms, or they may be temporary installations or transformations of public space for open discussion forums, lectures, or symposia. Public arts and cultural efforts should also include outdoor concerts, festivals, and film series as well as street performers, creative signage and sidewalk arts and crafts vendors. Street life would be improved with more outdoor seating at restaurants, bars and cafes as well as outside of Lexington, Cross Street and Broadway markets.
- **Baltimore Outdoors: Expand Parks, Trails and Bike Paths** – (Target population: All) In addition to improving and expanding green spaces in the City, arts and cultural programs in the parks and in public spaces need to be expanded and promoted more aggressively. The completed trail system will connect more than 45 neighborhoods with 3000+ acres of parkland, Midtown, and the Inner Harbor. A completed promenade and bike path would better link City neighborhoods and provide transportation alternatives. Park improvements should include dog parks,

which offer fast-paced “creative class” workers a place to socialize and build relationships in a more relaxed setting than the workplace or in bars and nightclubs.

- **Citywide Music Festival**– (Target population: All) The idea for a citywide music festival emerged as an art and culture transition goal of the O’Malley Administration. As envisioned, it would consist of decentralized showcases of local music, also attracting and engaging participating genre-specific counterparts from around the world. The festival’s aim would be to broaden the artistic and entertainment horizons of the population at large, bringing awareness to the many niches, manifestations, and varieties of music being produced here today. It would be open stylistically to all types of music – from downtown DJs to classical students, from hip-hop artists to alternative rockers. Similarly, various clubs, stages, and other nightlife destinations, record labels and related industry trades would benefit from the broad exposure and marketing potential.
- **Marketing to the Gay Community** – (Target population: All) The positive impact that gays and lesbians have on neighborhoods and cities is widely acknowledged, and Baltimore can do a better job acknowledging and promoting the pride that already exists in City neighborhoods. The Mayor’s Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Task Force will step up its engagement with the gay population, and it should seek greater City visibility and messaging (“You are welcome here”) opportunities at events as well as through strategic print advertising in national publications.

II. Making It Happen

- **Comprehensive Rezoning** – (Target population: Artists, Creative Entrepreneurs) The Planning department’s comprehensive rezoning effort will update old manufacturing and industrial codes to better accommodate art studios, performance, rehearsal and live-work spaces.
- **24-Hour City** - (Target population: Students, Young Professionals) Change the licenses for taverns so they can stay open until 3 or 4am like in New York or other big cities. This should be done in designated areas—such as downtown—to minimize public disturbance. This would require a joint City and State effort to propose the necessary legislation.
- **Smoke-Free Baltimore** – (Target population: All) A number of cities have banned smoking in bars and nightclubs. Recent legislation for a Smoke-Free Maryland died in committee, but local legislators could introduce Smoke-Free legislation for Baltimore City.
- **Block Party and Community Events Grants and Toolkit** – (Target population: All) The Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts or the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhoods should make information and support services available to community groups that want to throw block parties/street festivals. This would

include assistance in obtaining permits and closing streets as well as help in advertising these events to local craftspeople and vendors.

III. Communicating and Connecting People to Existing Opportunities

- **Comprehensive Online Calendar of Arts and Cultural Events** - (Target population: All) A comprehensive online calendar will be built and maintained in partnership with city booster organizations, plugging people in to everything from Oriole games to grassroots puppet shows. We need to blur the line between art and cultural events and leisure activities for families and others who make more spontaneous decisions. A spin-off component would be a subscriber-based weekly email service to provide incentives such as email discounts and promotions and plugs for lesser-known venues.
- **Baltimore Homegrown** – (Target population: All) Create a campaign to celebrate those restaurants, shops, businesses, and events unique to Baltimore, called “Baltimore Homegrown.” This promotion would celebrate Baltimore’s success in preserving its own identity in the face of the “mall of America,” which is quickly making all cities and towns across the country look the same. The campaign, which could be tied closely to the Heritage Area’s Authenticity initiative, could feature brochures for the tourist trade and new residents identifying those restaurants, shops and attractions that began in and are only in Baltimore. Sites, stores and restaurants could feature “Baltimore Homegrown” or “Authentic Baltimore” stickers on their windows. Special events, sales, promotions and visitor packages could be developed around Baltimore Homegrown days.
- **Creating a Baltimore Ad Council** - (Target population: All) Current efforts that attract, engage and retain creative class members should be publicized and branded as part of the Creative Baltimore Initiative. This can be done by setting up an advertising consortium for Baltimore promotions based upon the Ad Council’s model. The Ad Council is a national private non-profit organization that marshals talent from the advertising and communications industry to deliver critical messages to the public. Ad agencies donate creative services, and media outlets donate inventory. Baltimore would leverage its own ‘local’ model by harnessing the talents of local ad agencies and the resources of the media to promote Creative Baltimore projects.
- **Monthly Neighborhood Gallery Tours** – (Target population: All) Using “First Thursdays” in Mount Vernon as a model, this would be a citywide effort promoting the Baltimore creative arts community. Galleries, museums and other arts venues should coordinate so that these events are not competing with each other—different institutions could pick different days for their events.
- **Arts Shuttle** – (Target population: All) An Arts Shuttle that would take residents, employees and tourists from one cultural institution to another throughout the City. Several shuttles could be run to connect the many museums, galleries, music venues, etc. The shuttles could be artistic in appearance and name as well. The shuttles should

offer more service on weekends and provide all-night buses that connect people to the city's nightlife.

- **Artist Ambassadors/Baltimore Art Scene Course** - (Target population: All) *Radar* is currently planning a continuing-education course which introduces audiences to Baltimore artists and galleries through lectures, field trips, studio and gallery visits, and artist talks. This idea could be expanded with a large group of artist ambassadors making presentations at local schools and community meetings.
- **TV 21 Arts Programming** – (Target population: All) Augment programming to include Baltimore independent film showcase as well as insider previews of exhibitions and performances to de-mystify/bridge access to art events.

IV. Growing and Retaining Talent

- **Citywide Internship Program** – (Target population: Students, Creative Entrepreneurs) A key student retention effort would be a Citywide Internship Program that would connect local undergraduate and graduate students to professional internship opportunities at area businesses, nonprofit organizations, and City agencies. Through the program, the capacity of businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies would be increased, while local college students would gain professional experience, increase their opportunities for local job placement, and gain a foothold in the local community. A logical spin off of the internship program would be a volunteer program for students interested in finding community service opportunities with local nonprofits or public agencies.
- **Graduation/Career Fair** - (Target population: Students, Creative Entrepreneurs) An annual career fair, held in February or March, would facilitate college seniors staying in Baltimore after graduation by connecting them with local job opportunities. The event, held at the Baltimore Convention Center, would feature Baltimore area employers, apartment development and real estate representatives, and representatives from Baltimore area cultural attractions and financial institutions for students from local undergraduate and graduate schools. All vendors would have to pay for their space and support event advertising.

Note: The Greater Baltimore Career Consortium currently holds their Central Maryland College Job Fair each February at Towson University, and the Baltimore Collegetown Network currently steers its member institutions' students to this event.

- **Entrepreneurship Education** - (Target population: Students, Creative Entrepreneurs) Entrepreneurship classes should be offered at all levels of schooling and should involve Entrepreneur in Residence programs and professional mentoring opportunities. The following two model programs should be replicated and expanded: 1) The Mayor's Techpreneur Tours is a entrepreneurship education program that promotes business opportunities and city life to graduate and undergraduate-level students at four area colleges and universities; 2) The Mosh Pit competition, run by the Greater Baltimore Technology Council, brings together students from all of the

colleges in the region to work together in business teams to develop business plans and models in a competition to be judged by the Baltimore venture capital community. Roughly 500 students participate each year, and many students have gotten jobs in the city and chosen to stay as a direct result of the program.

- **Access to Capital Programs** – (Target population: Creative Entrepreneurs) Develop programs that connect potential entrepreneurs to venture capitalists (VCs) and angel investors. One example would be Business Plan competitions sponsored by these same groups with the prize being investment capital (tied to the business staying within the City of Baltimore).
- **Bioscience/Biotech Workforce Pipeline** - (Target population: Students, Creative Entrepreneurs) Continue to work with school system and other workforce/economic development partners to prepare youth and young adults to meet the workforce demands of the bioscience and high-tech companies expected to locate and grow in Baltimore's new biotech parks (near Johns Hopkins Hospital and the University of Maryland, Baltimore).

V. Increasing Funding for Arts and Culture

- **Baltimore Arts and Culture Fund** - (Target population: All) As proposed by BOPA, the Baltimore Arts and Culture Fund, established by the Mayor and City Council, is funded by [TBD – User Fee, Round Up for the Arts, etc.]. The purpose of the grant program is to create and manage access to funding for Baltimore's cultural organizations. Through two grant programs, the BCF distributes funds based on a competitive application process. For the purposes of this grant, cultural institutions are defined as organizations that, in addition to other activities, provide public access to art, music, dance, literature, history, heritage, and interpretative science programs, activities, and events.
- **1% For Art Revision** – (Target population: All) Through the Civic Design Commission, BOPA enforces the Baltimore City's 1% For Art Ordinance, which stipulates that up to 1% of construction costs of public projects be allocated for permanent fine art additions to the project. The Civic Design Commission has drafted a new 1% For Art Ordinance for Baltimore City. Basic changes include funding artwork at an amount equal to 1% of eligible costs, and supporting critical needs such as conservation and maintenance of percent-for-art sculpture throughout the city.

Getting Involved

As this is an ongoing collaborative effort, we welcome your feedback and involvement. Please send your questions, comments or suggestions to eric.friedman@baltimorecity.gov. You can also review updated initiative materials and contact us through our website at <http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/cinvestment/creative.html>.

Creative Baltimore Initiative Participants

180s, LLC
Abell Foundation
Advertising.com
After School Institute
American Dime Museum
Area 405
Art Exposure Inc.
Baltimore African American Tourism Council, Inc.
Baltimore Area Convention & Visitor's Association (BACVA)
Baltimore Choral Arts Society
Baltimore City Heritage Area
Baltimore Collegetown Network
Baltimore Commission on Aging and Retirement Education (CARE)
Baltimore Community Foundation
Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)
Baltimore Gallery
Baltimore Jazz Alliance
Baltimore Junior Association of Commerce
Baltimore Museum of Industry
Baltimore Museum of Industry
Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA)
Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts (BOPA)
Baltimore Sports and Social Club
Baltimore Theater Alliance
Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division
Campbell Group
Carton Donofrio Partners, Inc.
CB Richard Ellis
Charles Street Development Corporation
Chesapeake Habitat for Humanity
Civic Design Commission
Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP)
Community Law In Action
Creative Alliance
Dance Baltimore
Department of Housing and Community Development
Department of Recreation and Parks
Downtown Partnership
East Baltimore Development, Inc. (EBDI)
Economic Alliance
Elm Street Development
English On-Site
EntreQuest

Fluid Movement
Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA)
Greater Baltimore Technology Council
Greater Homewood Community Corporation
Heffner & Weber
High Zero/Red Room/Berndt Group
Homebuilders Association of MD
Link Arts Inc.
Live Baltimore
Maryland Business Council
Maryland Historical Society
Maryland Institute College of Art
Mayor's Advisory Board for the Station North Arts & Entertainment District
Mayor's Council on Cultural Tourism
Mayor's Office of Employment Development
Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods
Mayor's Office of Minority Business Development
Mt. Vernon Cultural District
OYO Traditions Cultural Institute
Parks and People Foundation
Patterson Park CDC
Peabody Institute
Planit
Planning Department
Preservation Maryland
Radar Review, L.L.C.
The Shapiro Company
Southeast Community Development Corporation
Stonebridge Communications
Struever Bros., Eccles & Rouse, Inc.
T. Rowe Price
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Urban Land Institute, Young Leaders group
Urbanite magazine
Wide Angle Media
Young Lawyers Corporate Productions

The Mayor's Office also solicited input from the core members of the City's arts and entertainment districts, local public relation firms, and representatives from local museums and attractions and colleges and universities as well as individual artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs.